

Will the broadcast flag interfere with consumers ability to make copies of DTV content for their personal use, either on personal video recorders or removable media?

Yes. The division between "professionals" and consumers is arbitrary and means that the future of media innovation is put firmly in the hands of large companies. Consumers will be held hostage to the slow-moving profit-motivated media companies. Consumers will not be free to innovate.

Would the digital flag interfere with consumers ability to send DTV content across networks, such as home digital networks connecting digital set top boxes, digital recorders, digital servers and digital display devices?

Yes. The devices must all be certified by the media-producing cartel, which means that small third-party innovation will be stifled. I use a slimp3 (slimdevices.com) to stream mp3s from my server to my stereo. I don't want the responsibility for innovations such as this to rest in the hands of Philips, Sony, and Toshiba--the bulk of recent media innovation has come from independents and only popularized by the large hardware companies. There are millions more home hobbyists and electronically-minded engineers who each day are creating innovative new hardware than there are major technology companies. My technology choices will be severely curtailed in the future if the digital flag is adopted.

Would the broadcast flag requirement limit consumers ability to use their existing electronic equipment (equipment not built to look for the flag) or make it difficult to use older components with new equipment that is compliant with the broadcast flag standard?

It won't limit existing equipment, but that's not my concern. I worry that future equipment will be crippled.

Would a broadcast flag requirement limit the development of future equipment providing consumers with new options?

Yes! Innovation comes from doing new things with existing materials. The problem with the digital flag and other so-called "rights management" systems is that they flat-out prevent certain uses of digital media. Innovations *cannot* come from those uses, because the hardware prevents it. The only people without the hamstrung equipment will be "professionals". How is a home hobbyist supposed to get the equipment that would let him create a revolutionary new device? If the professional equipment was easy to come by, piracy wouldn't be stopped, and if the professional equipment is hard to come by, innovation will be stopped.

What will be the cost impact, if any, that a broadcast flag requirement would have on consumer electronics equipment?

Given the absence of an actual certifying board, "professional" equipment simply means "expensive". So the *rich* can have all the convenience they want, but the rest of us are stuck with crippled devices and the broadcasters' assumptions of what "Fair Use" means. If you want hardware that will let you (for example) record a dozen copies of your appearance on Jeopardy to send to your family members, you'll have to have *won* Jeopardy first.

Other Comments:

The media middlemen (Sony, United Artists, Warner Brothers, Fox, etc.) are stupid and scared. They don't lose money because of consumers. Ask yourself why commercial pirates in the US attempt to make their copies look like originals (down to trying to fake the Microsoft seal). It's because

consumers want to be honest. They'll pay \$30 to buy a DVD, and know it's wrong to pay \$5 at the flea market for an obvious copy. They'll pay \$15 for an original CD.

It's yet to be proven that the recording, television, or movie industry loses any significant amount of money because of consumers having more convenience with the media they consume. There's a large legitimate industry of hardware and software for digital music files that simply Would Not Exist if the music industry had had the equivalent of a digital broadcast flag. What similar industries will the digital broadcast flag kill, stifle, or cripple in the future?